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**I. The Importance of reading the bible** (*What bible reading will do for you*)

You can hear from God by bible verses you just happened to read during your regular bible reading time. (if you have one) You can hear from God by thoughts coming to you during quiet times. Sometimes God speaks to us through other christians, showing us the need for close people in our lives, more people than just ourselves. Chances are you receive most of your guidance from your bible reading time.

**1. God guides us often by leading us to certain bible verses.**

This guidance may give us insight on what we are supposed to do, or not do. It can be about decisions we need to make about jobs, purchases, or even people. It can even be about the need for us to change our attitude about something. Whatever reason God chooses to lead us to certain verses, we tend to remember those times that we needed His guidance in our lives. *Can you think of a time you experienced this?*

**2. God gives us promises by guiding us to certain bible verses.**

These promises can help us be more patient and have less anxiety about something

we were worried about. Again, we remember those promises that we received in the past, and how God helped us then. *Can you remember times where He has given you bible verses that were promises to you?*

**3. It is a reminder of things in the bible that we may have forgotten about.**

We can think things like "Oh, yea, I remember now. God helped Joseph through the mess with his brothers. And, he didn't blame God during the mess. We can be sure that he did not like what his brothers did to him, but the bible does not show that he hated them. We can see in the bible that he was cautious of them when he met them later during the famine. But, Joseph chose to stay close to God and to keep doing the right things." The bible is definitely a reminder of how we need to be in our own life.

**4. Sometimes bible reading reminds us that we are valuing someone, or something, or even valuing possessions on earth, more than we are valuing God.**

God is the only one who will never leave us or forsake us. Family and close friends are going to someday pass away. We won't have them anymore. Sometimes they will even hurt you. But, God will be the only one who is always there for us. He is one who never wants to hurt you. If you read the bible often, God will lead you to verses that remind you of that.

We are the ones who allow ourselves to leave His influence and help, not making Him as important as He should be. We do this by making others, or things in this world, to become more important than God. In essence, they become like our gods.

Note: Learning how to hear from Him right now will become crucial when you feel devastated someday in the future. If you have lived your life not really seeking Him, not learning from Him, and not talking and listening to Him, you are going to have a harder time trying to suddenly learn that when you feel devastated. Feeling devastated effects your ability to think right. **NOW is the time to be learning how to hear God. NOW is the time to learn how to find answers to life's difficulties.** Do not wait until you are going through your toughest days to learn how to hear from Him. Build up good experiences right now. Then you will be more ready for the future.

So, bible reading can remind us that God has to be #1, always. Then family is 2nd, etc. Always remind yourself that you are going to lose close family and close friends. It is a matter of time. GOD is the only one that you never have to lose. Bible reading, with prayer (talking to God and hearing Him), is going to keep you close to Him and prepare you better for any tough days in the future.

**Bible reading will definitely strengthen your faith and walk with God.**

**Romans 10:17 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> So then faith *comes* by hearing, and **hearing by ---> the word of God.**

**Psalm 119** is the longest chapter in the bible. The entire chapter about the importance of God's Word. It poetically uses many different words for the bible, like statutes, your word, your precepts, etc.

**Psalm 119:2 (NIV)**

<sup>2</sup> **Blessed** are they **who keep his statutes** and **seek him with all their heart.**  
(*People want to be blessed by God without doing anything, without even seeking Him, or letting Him guide them. This verse tells us specifically how to be blessed by Him*)

**Psalm 119:11 (NIV)**

<sup>11</sup> **I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin** against you. (*bible reading helps us to not sin*)

**Psalm 119:15 (NIV)**

<sup>15</sup> **I meditate** on your precepts (*spend time thinking about what bible verses are telling me*) & **consider your ways.** (*I consider how You do things so I do the same*)

**5. Sometimes when we read the bible God will lead us to read something that we are about to experience soon.** We didn't know it at the time we were reading, but when we do experience a surprising problem, it was like God was giving us a warning ahead of time to make sure we handle things in the right way, the way He wants us to do it.

If you are not reading the bible on a regular basis, you will miss these warnings most of the time.

**B.P.Q.C.** (Bible reading, Prayer to God, Quiet time to hear from God, and Church) is the key to making sure you are putting God first, and making sure you are constantly hearing from Him. It also helps to make sure you are making yourself available to be led by Him, to do what He wants you to do. It can ALSO be a time that God gives you attitude adjustments. All of the **B.P.Q.C.**'s are very important in our lives.

You are responsible for your own spiritual journey. You have to show God you want and need to hear from Him. [James 4:8](#) - Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

**II. Bible resources: Journaling Bibles, Study Bibles, Bible Note Journals, or Prayer**

## **Journals.**

We live in a day where we have an incredible amount of resources to make bible reading more interesting and fun. This year bible sales have been up about 22% over the previous year, probably because of even more new resources.

### **A. Bibles that intentionally leave space on the side of the verses for your own personal notes or thoughts.**

Instead of just underlining your favorite verses, now you can write down a few of your own thoughts on the side next to the verse.

*Here are some of those type of bibles* (All prices listed below are from Amazon)

**Spiral Bible** (KJV, NLT, W.E.B, NASB) (\$199) **ESV Spiral-Bound Journaling Bible** (\$75), **ESV Journaling Bible Interleaved Edition** (a full blank page to the side of each bible verse page - leather \$100, other \$39) **Illustrating Bible NIV** (\$63), **Journal the Word Bible** (KJV, NIV, NKJV, NASB, AMP) (\$20-\$38), **NLT Wide Margin bible** (\$34), **Notetaking Bible** (KJV, NKJV, NIV) (\$27), **CSB Legacy Note-taking Bible**, (\$32-\$80)

**ESV Journaling Study Bible** (not a spiral type) (\$32) has the best of both worlds - study notes from ESV & room for your own journaling notes to the side of verses.

### **B. Study Bibles**

Most study bibles have commentary type of notes, or archaeological notes, or even what was going on at the time of what you are reading. Study bibles can be very helpful in understanding what you are reading. The information is fascinating.

*3 of the better Study Bibles:*

**NKJV Study Bible** (\$26-\$41 not in leather) **Life Application Study Bible** (*available in NLT, NASB, NKJV, and NIV translations*) (\$37-\$76), **Amplified Study Bible** (\$24-\$44).

Most of the study bibles I looked at don't have real leather. Ebay may have some in leather if you want it that way.

**Keep in mind that the newer the bible, or the newer the study bible, the higher the chance of getting a newer version of a translation.** (We will look at Translation information in a few minutes under **III Translations**.)

### **C. A different form of Study Bible**

When we think of a study bible, we think of the above (B), one with notes about

what was going on at the time, or with commentary notes, or archaeological thoughts. A few study bibles are not like that at all. I personally think they should not be called a study bible because it can be confusing on what you think you are buying.

They are "growing with God" type of study notes, or we could say they are notes about how to apply the verses you just read.

*Are these good?* Sure. They make you apply the verses you have been reading to your own life, which is great. Just know what you are getting with these so you are not disappointed. These actually may help you grow more in your walk with God than a regular study bible. Regular Study bibles teach you about what you are reading. These newer, different study bibles help you specifically apply what you just read to your own life.

*Here are two examples of bibles called Study Bibles that are not typical:*

**Courage for Life Study Bible for Men (NLT) and they have one for Women.**

I have the one for men. I think it is a good bible that has excellent thoughts.

**Experiencing God Study Bible** (Amazon has it in **CSB** only for \$26-\$100; Ebay has used copies in the **NKJV** or **NIV** for approx \$10-\$20) These do have extra space on the side of the verses so you can write down your own thoughts about the verses.

Note: If you choose to buy one of these make sure you are not buying the Experiencing God bible study book. That is NOT the same as the bible. So, look specifically for "Experiencing God Study Bible."

The writer's thoughts, Henry Blackaby, are excellent. He talks **a lot** about how we are supposed to be obedient to God, what falling away from God does to us, and how we are here on earth to be led by God to do His will, not just for our own selfish desires.

#### **D. Bible Notes Journals Or Prayer Journals.**

These can be used instead of spending money to buy a new bible that has room for notes on the side.

You can buy journals that are made specifically for either bible notes or prayer notes. (\$5 to \$15)

Or, its cheaper just to buy a regular, blank, spiral notebook at a place like Roth's. Roth's Dress for Less has a whole section of blank journals with Godly wording on the cover. You can buy one that you can use specifically for bible notes only, then

get a separate one for your prayer journal only. Last time I checked they are about \$5 each.

Or, you can buy one spiral notebook and make it all one journal, more like a diary, whereby you write down what you read in the bible today, along with what it meant to you. And, add in your prayers you made to God, on what date, then leave some space where you can later write down how God answered those prayers.

The only problem I see in making a journal to be a diary is it is not something you would necessarily want to leave laying around the house. You may have private prayers, or private notes, in it that you do not wish someone to see.

*Why have journals? It can do at least 3 things for us:*

1. When we write down things it sticks in our mind better. We remember better.
2. When we write down our frustrations, and what we prayed about, or we write down a bible verse God gave us that day, it helps relieve some of the anxiety we felt. It lets us verbalize our worries, or irritations, which a lot of times helps bring some relief to our emotions.
3. It becomes a journal we can go back to from time to time and look at our old notes of what God has done for us in the past. AND, It is also something you can leave to your family when you pass away some day. In the latter case, it would be a powerful witness and keepsake to the family. It may bring them to salvation, or a closer walk with God.

### **III. Bible Translations**

There are lots of translations of the bible, in my opinion probably too many. If you choose to own several translations, I would recommend making one of the translations to be your main source for memorizing a bible verse, rather than constantly mixing up which translation you want to memorize a verse from.

When studying the bible, there is an advantage of having several translation to be sure you understand the truest meaning of a verse. Sometimes things will read clearer in one translation over another one. For example, there are times the NKJV is clearer to me than the NIV, and vice versa. Other times the AMPLIFIED bible gives me additional insights that I didnt get from the NIV or NKJV. Laurie loves the New Living Translation. I go to it occasionally to get even another insight.

*You can read others besides the below, but highly recommend one of these:*

**King James Version** (KJV) (still an old faithful translation)

**New King James Version (NKJV)** (minor changes in 1984, otherwise no big change)  
**New International Version (NIV)** (1978, 1984 mainly the same; major changes 2011)  
**New Living Translation (NLT)** (2004 made big changes, called NLT second edition)  
**Amplified Bible (AMP)** (2015 made bigger changes)

If you are not sure what translation edition you are buying, you can usually find it in the first few pages of a bible. It will be the last date you see. For example NIV, 1978, 1984 means you are getting the 1984 edition. If it said NIV 1978, 1984, 2011, you are getting the 2011 edition. Look for the last date next to the translation information.

I am not a huge fan of any of the newer translations made after the year 2000. I have yet to read one that I felt the new translation was better than the older translation. The only exception might be with the Amplified bible. I still prefer the older version, but the newer one isn't real bad either.

Others: English Standard Version (ESV), Christian Standard Bible (CSB), New American Standard Bible (NASB) - been around since 1971, updated 1995 & again in 2020. I don't know anything about the 2020 edition.

#### Side-by-side bibles:

You can buy side-by-side bibles that have, for example, NIV and AMPLIFIED side-by-side in one bible. They are handy to be able to quickly check two translations on a particular verse. But, keep in mind, most of those are newer translations of the bible. If that

is what you want, then fine. But, if you do not like a newer translation, then you may not want to buy those. The only exception to this is if the side-by-side was a NKJV and AMPLIFIED. The NKJV will be completely fine, & the newer Amplified is good enough.

\* Opinion? Stay away from The Message bible. Many believe it's the most inaccurate bible ever made.

**Audio Bibles** (for people traveling alot, or people who hate to read)

The Advantages: If you buy one of the two below, they are like hearing a movie. They are fascinating to listen to.

The disadvantages: It is harder for you to be led by God to a particular verse in the bible that God is wanting to show you to give you wisdom for your current situation. It's not impossible, just harder to happen.

The other disadvantage? It is easier for your mind to wander off and you miss what the bible is saying. But, if nothing else, they are fascinating to listen to in the car.

These two audio bibles are both fascinating:

**1. The Word of Promise** (*Amazon.com is \$119; Ebay used around \$50?*) If you buy on Ebay, make sure the purchase includes all of the cd's.

**2. The Bible Experience** ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) about \$62 for the whole thing. Ebay about \$30, used. If used, make sure you get all 79 cd's)

*Not sure on the price of the set through "Redeemed CPO bookstore" in Springfield*

They used actors to do both of the above. The actors read the Bible as if they were actually in a movie. There are dozens of readers that were used. So, when you hear the bible you will hear different voices of the different people in the Bible. You will also hear background noises like sheep, or if there is a crowd, you hear them in the background. It is like you are hearing a movie.

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## **Summary -**

Today we have looked at many bible resources. We looked at things like:

### **I. The Importance of reading the Bible**

**II. Bible Resources:** Journaling bibles, Study Bibles, a new Study Bible, Bible Notes Journals, and Prayer Journals.

### **III. Bible Translations**

Next week we will look at Bible Reading Plans, and Topical Bible studies.